

# CBMs and the Three Pillars of Japanese Security Policy<sup>1</sup>

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The greatest challenge for Japan's defense establishment since the end of the Cold War has been maintaining the status quo. The juxtaposition of domestic constraints and international requirements during the Cold War gave birth to a strategy of de-emphasizing military contributions to security while maintaining the Alliance with the United States. Under the radically altered regional security environment, Japan must play a larger military role to sustain the Alliance, despite the absence of a clear threat such as the Soviet Union, but without disturbing neighboring countries fearful of its military capabilities or violating internalized norms against the use of force.<sup>2</sup>

To strike a balance between doing too little to satisfy the United States and too much for either domestic pacifists or suspicious neighbors, Japan established three pillars of defense.<sup>3</sup> These are: Japan's own capabilities for self-defense; the U.S.–Japan Alliance; and diplomatic efforts to ensure international peace and security. Each pillar represents a distinct approach to security: unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral.

Embracing these three pillars was not merely a compromise among three distinct approaches. The three pillars were intended to support a single edifice: a long term strategy for the gradual transformation of the security relationships and architecture of the region. The short term priority was regional stability. Ensuring territorial defense, which had been the primary defense function during the Cold War,<sup>4</sup> was no longer the difficult challenge it had been under threat of Soviet invasion, but the collapse of the Soviet Union injected a fluidity into the regional order that itself posed an entirely different threat. With increasing interdependence, Japan's security had become “inevitably linked” to regional peace and prosperity. In considering how to preserve stability in the short term, Japan saw the need to structure the regional security order to promote cooperation rather than competition.

Unfortunately, various factors such, as Japan's longstanding internal cleavage over defense issues, the divided structure of security policy making in Japan, concerns in Washington about preserving U.S. leadership, and accidents of timing, have combined to blur the vision of a cooperative regional order that linked the pillars. Indeed, the very articulation of the strategy into three distinct pillars allowed partisans of the different approaches to view them as

alternatives rather than components. Instead of working in harmony, Japan's efforts in the unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral arenas are increasingly falling into competition with each other. Rather than a single strategy, Tokyo appears to be pursuing policies along various lines, where strengthening one of the pillars saps the others.

To remedy this problem, Japan must develop ways for its policies to work together at every level, not merely at the very broadest. This essay cannot provide all the answers, but begins the process of searching for them. One avenue to achieve this is more creative and effective use of confidence-building measures (CBMs) for regional security. CBMs can help both to strengthen the Alliance and make it less threatening to Japan's neighbors. Working toward a cooperative regional security order through various channels is still a reasonable approach, but if the separate efforts are not integrated, then short term friction will impede progress toward the long term goal.

## **ESTABLISHING THE THREE PILLARS**

Political volatility and the lack of expertise on security issues within the Japanese elite hindered the adaptation to new circumstances after the Cold War ended. But it was not simply a matter of the people in charge; the very structure of national security policy making in Japan had been designed to be inefficient, to prevent sudden shifts in military posture or doctrine. Furthermore, the Japanese had become extremely comfortable with the existing security arrangements and few were eager to change. As a result of conflicting pressures and reluctance to take any drastic actions, Japan's defense policy responded very slowly to the changed environment.

The Japanese government's approach to security had previously involved all the elements of the three pillar strategy, but they had not been explicitly identified as such. The 1957 Basic Policy for National Defense cites the need to "support the activities of the United Nations and promote international cooperation," along with developing the capabilities for self-defense and maintaining the U.S.–Japan Alliance.<sup>5</sup> However, the framework for security policy has clearly been substantially altered under the 1995 revision of the National Defense Program Outline (NDPO). Each of the three pillars has been subsequently strengthened.

## **Japan's self-defense capabilities**

The Japan Defense Agency (JDA) maintains that the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) constitute the defense capability necessary and sufficient for deterring or repelling an attack against Japanese territory. The Maritime SDF is widely considered the most powerful naval force in Asia, aside from the U.S. Seventh Fleet, possessing advanced equipment such as Aegis cruisers and the world's largest Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) fleet. The Air SDF is likewise equipped with state-of-the-art aircraft, including AWACS planes and the advanced, co-developed F-2. Finally, the Ground SDF, although small among Asian armies with a troop strength of 145,000 active-duty personnel and 15,000 reserves, is highly trained and maintains advanced capabilities for ground-based air-defense and sea-defense. It also has the armor, artillery, and infantry to withstand a limited invasion, should any enemies manage to reach land.

The original 1976 NDPO defined the SDF's role as defense against a limited attack on Japan until such time as the United States could come to Japan's aid. This narrow scope drew from a recognition that a defense build-up designed to allow Japan counter the Soviet Union in the Pacific would overburden the Japanese economy and undermine the conservative government. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the regional environment was expected to be much more benign, opening the possibility of a reduction of SDF capabilities to an even lower level. The various branches of the SDF also have supplemental roles, such as disaster relief, but their main mission is to provide unilateral military capability for the defense of Japan. Under the 1995 NDPO, self-defense has emerged from the shadow of the Alliance to become a major pillar of Japan's overall defense strategy.

## **The Alliance**

The second pillar of Japan's defense is the U.S.–Japan Alliance. The Alliance has, since its revision in 1960, committed the United States to the defense of Japan. The treaty is mutual but not reciprocal; Japan obtained a security guarantee in exchange for providing facilities for U.S. forward-deployed forces. At present these consist of over 60,000 American personnel, including the Third Marine Expeditionary Force and the Seventh Fleet. While the provision of bases was sufficient to win U.S. defense guarantees in the early Cold War years, Japan gradually faced the need to offer additional support to the Alliance to placate U.S. demands for “burden sharing” from the Nixon Doctrine onward. This has led Japan to provide Host Nation Support (HNS) to the United States, covering salaries of local hires, construction and maintenance on bases, fuel, and so on. Increasing financial contributions have been the main avenue for

redressing the fundamental asymmetry of the Alliance relationship since HNS was introduced in 1976.

Since the Soviet threat was the Alliance's main rationale, doubts emerged about its sustainability in the post-Cold War era. Given the long-standing opposition to the Alliance among large segments of the Japanese public, and high levels of hostility in the U.S. Congress towards Japan's "free riding" traditional role, smooth continuation of the Alliance relationship was far from assured. Dedicated public servants on both sides, and a bit of luck, made its survival possible.<sup>6</sup> Japan has maintained the Alliance as a core element of its national security strategy, arguing that the engagement of the United States and U.S. military presence are vital for peace and stability in the region.<sup>7</sup> The 1995 NDPO cited the need to pay "due attention to enhancing the credibility of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements," revealing Tokyo's position of preparing to make it more clear that support for the Alliance is a function of the SDF. Although the 1995 NDPO itself defines those functions as national defense, disaster relief, and support for multilateralism, the subsequent 1997 review of the Guidelines for U.S.–Japan Defense Cooperation resulted in a well-delineated set of tasks which the Japanese would perform in support of U.S. forces in the region. In this sense the SDF can contribute to the Alliance in the Far East, beyond the defense of Japan proper, as articulated in Article VI of the Mutual Security Treaty.

### **Multilateral cooperation**

The third pillar is less familiar and less tangible, but perhaps best represents the direction of Japanese defense thinking after the Cold War. It draws on the tradition of non-military efforts to achieve security, embodied in the doctrine of Comprehensive Security formulated under Prime Minister Ohira Masayoshi. It also adopts many of the precepts of security cooperation as formulated and practiced in Europe, with its strong focus on multilateralism. In this sense the third pillar embodies a liberal view of security, in which a community of nations can transcend a balance of power paradigm to achieve cooperative security. The key elements of this third pillar are economic cooperation, security dialogues, and support for multilateral organizations.

The most prominent among these elements are Japan's economic cooperation and aid. Tokyo's Official Development Assistance (ODA) strategy has been well investigated<sup>8</sup> from the economic and diplomatic perspective, if not as a part of national security strategy. ODA emerged out of war reparations to Southeast Asia, and was initially aimed primarily at expanding

export markets. Under the Ohira cabinet, development assistance and economic cooperation became more of a national security policy tool, serving both to improve Japan's ties with its neighbors and to assuage American demands for burden sharing through "strategic aid" to U.S. client states. Since the end of the Cold War, aid has been a major means by which Tokyo helps develop a structure of economic interdependence in the Asia-Pacific region. Recently, however, two factors have begun to weaken slightly Japan's willingness to rely on this approach alone. First is the relative decline of Japanese economic power and the increasingly precarious financial position of the central government. With deficits running as high as 13 percent of Gross Domestic Produce (GDP) and a national debt that exceeds 100 percent of GDP, Tokyo no longer has the wherewithal to continue expanding its aid budget. Secondly, Japanese are doubting the effectiveness of aid as a political tool, given evidence such as China's belligerence over nuclear testing in 1995<sup>9</sup> and India's and Pakistan's testing of nuclear weapons in 1998.

Support for multilateral organizations has deep roots in Japan, where the United Nations embodies the legitimacy of the state system and offers the sole sanction for the use of force in international politics. The strength of Japanese affection for the United Nations (UN) system is evident in the public approval of SDF participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), despite strong initial reluctance to allow the overseas dispatch of Japanese troops.<sup>10</sup> This category of "international contribution" is so popular that it has assumed a prominent official place in the SDF's roles and missions. The 1995 NDPO defines three major roles for the SDF, including the defense of Japan (as discussed above), response to disasters and humanitarian emergencies,<sup>11</sup> and "contribution to the creation of a more stable security environment." This contribution can take the form of direct participation in UN PKO, as well as cooperation with UN and other efforts for arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation.

The newest aspect of Japan's strategy to strengthen the third pillar is support for security dialogues, defense exchanges, and other forms of CBMS. Official documents such as *Defense of Japan* white papers, diplomatic blue books, and the 1995 NDPO explicitly call for promotion of security dialogues and defense exchanges on a bilateral and multilateral basis. A web of bilateral contacts with Russia, South Korea, and China has been in place since the mid 1990s, and a range of Track Two multilateral forums has been developed to discuss security issues.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the creation of an official security dialogue process for the entire Asia-Pacific region in the form of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has not only provided a venue for exchanging information and views, but has also provided the possible beginnings of a multilateral cooperative security structure. Japan participates avidly in these bodies, and also hosts a welter of multilateral meetings through the Defense Agency, the National Institute for

Defense Studies, and the Defense Academy, as well as the Foreign Ministry and its affiliated organizations. The stated purpose of all of these activities is to “enhance mutual confidence.” CBMs have quickly earned a place as a core component of Japan’s overall national security strategy, and are to be integrated into a comprehensive approach to security in which the three pillars—self-defense, Alliance, and cooperation work—in harmony. Realization of this strategy will depend on well-planned implementation of CBMs, as part of a more coherent vision of a regional security structure buttressed by efforts at the unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral levels.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH PILLAR**

There are excellent reasons for pursuing each of the three approaches, and each has partisan support. Unilateral efforts for self-defense are the norm across the international community, and in an environment characterized by most scholars of international relations as “anarchic” such efforts are indispensable. If a pure collective security structure were feasible, it would still require national capabilities to support its functioning. Such capabilities could be expected to gradually evolve from existing militaries. Even with every intention of cooperating with the international community in general and abiding by its constitutional provision to avoid the use or threat of force to resolve international disputes, Japan would need military capabilities. Moreover, Japan has articulated how enhancing its military capabilities on a unilateral basis is intended also to support the forward-deployed forces of the United States. The Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), followed by the revised Guidelines of 1997, established the framework for such synergy. Other aspects of SDF strengthening are oriented toward multilateral cooperation, such as more long-range transport aircraft for deployment of peacekeepers or evacuation of non-combatants and refugees.

The Alliance likewise has persuasive justifications. In its favor, advocates note the need to keep the United States engaged in the region in a time of strategic fluidity, especially since the U.S. military is almost universally accepted as a stabilizing presence. In regard to those who do not appreciate the American presence, North Korea for example, many Japanese feel the Alliance is still important for its deterrent function. Another argument is that if the Alliance were weakened or terminated, not only would the U.S. withdrawal leave a power vacuum, but also Japanese defense capability would most likely increase sharply, destabilizing relations with its neighbors. This line of reasoning is popular among past victims of Japanese aggression, and,

ironically, is also prevalent among leftists in Japan who formerly opposed the Alliance for fear the United States would drag Japan into war. This “cap in the bottle” function of the Alliance is decidedly unpopular among mainstream Japanese, however.

The third pillar represents the strong Japanese preference for a non-military approach to security. More precisely, by pursuing a liberal vision of cooperation in security affairs<sup>13</sup>, it allows Japan to avoid “power politics.” If the first two pillars constitute what is necessary for practical reasons, the third pillar is necessary in order for policy to reflect Japan’s aspirations. The cooperative approach also works to improve security relationships in the region might that are characterized by mutual suspicion. Left uncorrected, such an environment could degenerate into hostility and arms racing.<sup>14</sup> While some realists argue that the nature of international politics makes such suspicions entirely natural and appropriate, by working to defuse them and generate an atmosphere of trust, the third pillar can help achieve security at a lower cost and lower chance of war than can deterrence alone.

## **STRUCTURAL WEAKNESS IN EACH OF THE THREE PILLARS**

Although each of the pillars represents policy approaches that Japan clearly needs to pursue, each presents some problems on its own or in interactions with the others. While in theory the strengthening of any single element should buttress Japan’s security as a whole, in practice each small step taken without regard for its broader context can complicate and confuse Japan’s overall strategy.

### **Self-Defense Efforts**

First, despite the nearly fifty year history of the SDF, there are still concerns about Japan’s unilateral efforts to enhance its security. Such concerns are entirely natural in an anarchic environment, where states compete for survival, but in this case they are of course based not only on the nature of international politics itself but on Japan’s unfortunate history of aggression. Suspicions linger that despite its avowed non-violent posture, Japan might again become a military power and compel others to its will. In this context, efforts to strengthen the SDF through acquisition of advanced weapons and support systems evoke concern, even in friendly countries. Although its military capability is constrained by policy to defensive functions only, SDF procurement is watched closely as an indicator of Japan’s future course and

doctrine. Japan's huge defense budget and highly advanced technology mean that it could develop the military power to support fully independent strategic posture relatively quickly should it decide to do so. Such a scenario is extremely implausible<sup>15</sup> but the very possibility creates a special context for Tokyo's unilateral efforts to enhance its security. In particular, the history of efforts to develop an autonomous defense industrial base raises concerns about the permanence of Japan's commitment to security cooperation even with its one ally.<sup>16</sup>

Observers with fears of Japan "going it alone" can interpret efforts to strengthen Japan's unilateral defense strength as clear signs of a hidden agenda. Tokyo's decision in 1999 to develop its own intelligence satellite was one among several factors, along with an apparent rise in nationalism, that alarmed many, even in Washington. The lack of a unified command structure and failure to enhance interoperability add fuel to this fire. As for the acquisition of capabilities such as long-range transport in order to support multilateral security efforts, it is either derided as "cover" for developing power-projection or is seen as sapping Japan's ability to contribute to the Alliance. On the other hand, acquiring those systems and capabilities deemed necessary for the Alliance—Theater Missile Defense (TMD) foremost among them—causes China, Russia, and others to doubt that Japan is serious about multilateral cooperation.

Thus, strengthening the unilateral pillar of Japan's strategy generates imbalances that threaten the other pillars, either by causing friction within the Alliance or disturbing Japan's neighbors.

## **The Alliance**

The Alliance, despite its central importance for Japan's defense since its establishment, has never been free of problems. During the Cold War, pacifists felt Japan was far more likely to be attacked because of the presence of U.S. bases. And given the need to expand Japan's role in supporting U.S. forces under the 1997 Guidelines review, the Alliance has come to seem more threatening to neighbors like China.<sup>17</sup> Recently Chinese have voiced criticisms that the Alliance has now become a dangerous factor in regional security. These attacks on the Alliance incite domestic Japanese critics as well, who call for maintaining the relationship with the United States without any changes to Japan's military role.

In pointing out these problems, this essay in no way calls for a diminution of the U.S.–Japan Alliance relationship. The Alliance is clearly necessary for regional stability, and

is the best guarantee of both American and Japanese security interests. The concern is that as a pillar of Japan's overall strategy, it is unnecessarily generating friction with the other pillars. The implication that it exists to keep the Japanese down inflames the issues of unilateral capability, while by appearing to be antithetical to cooperative security it breeds resentment among multilateralists.

### **Multilateral cooperation**

Although the third, multilateral security pillar has strong justification for both domestic and systemic reasons, like the first two it faces problems in implementation. One danger is "overselling,"<sup>18</sup> in which the promise of a cooperative security approach is accepted before it is realized. The formation of the ARF produced great excitement among advocates of multilateral security cooperation, who began to argue that the Alliance should be replaced by a multilateral security structure in the near future. Given that the state of war on the Korean Peninsula has still not officially ended, and North Korea has in the 1990s invested a huge share of its scarce economic resources in military programs including nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, this was premature to say the least. Even with a resolution of this most obvious security problem, the region is a long way from building a functioning security mechanism to replace the current arrangements. The designers of Japan's tripartite strategy recognized this, but the very articulation of their strategy into three separate pillars allowed the different approaches to seem like alternatives.

The greater emphasis on multilateralism is not unpopular among those Japanese who quietly favor the unilateral approach, since they see in it an escape route from the constraints of the relationship with the United States. Among those who support both unilateral and bilateral (Alliance) approaches, the investment by the SDF in training and equipment to support third pillar missions seem like a misallocation of resources. This two-against-one thinking shows that the three pillars have not yet been made mutually reinforcing.

### **OTHER FACTORS COMPLICATING THE THREE PILLAR STRATEGY**

The dissonance among the three approaches described above is exacerbated by cleavages in both Japan and the United States. Within Japan, the splits permeate the political world, the administrative structure, and society at large. First, the "1955 System," under which the opposition Japan Socialist Party continually attacked both the Alliance and the SDF,

continues to shape attitudes about security in general and defense cooperation with the United States in particular. Opponents of the Alliance no longer call for its immediate termination, but still hope to see it supplanted by different arrangements. The corollary to this is that even supporters of the Alliance within the governing Liberal Democratic Party saw little benefit from doing so publicly, since defense issues did not lead to votes.<sup>19</sup> Second, bureaucratic turf wars between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the JDA over control of security policy, though much less intense than in the past, add non-ideological elements of conflict to the development of national security strategy. Strong and committed political leadership can ameliorate the MOFA-JDA struggle, but until recently lack of interest and expertise have meant no such leadership was available. Finally, suspicion of uniformed military at all levels of Japanese society has long prevented the smooth integration of military and non-military components of security policy.<sup>20</sup>

Two other factors within Japan have recently caused problems for security policy. First, the tight economic situation led to the first cuts in defense outlays since the end of World War II. The Japanese defense budget has been a concern for Washington for decades, with pressures for Japan to spend more, to contribute more for U.S. forces in Japan, to procure more from U.S. defense contractors, and to acquire systems that help support U.S. strategy. Given that the JDA has similar but slightly different priorities, and that the budget can no longer grow enough to satisfy all demands, any allocation in one area is seen as coming at the expense of another. For Japan to spend money on indigenous intelligence satellites when it wants to cut Host Nation Support strikes the Pentagon as a sign of a lack of commitment to the Alliance.

The second new problem in Japan has been the deterioration of relations between central and local governments in regard to security issues. Many local governments retain a strong pacifist orientation, supplemented by an even stronger “not in my backyard” sentiment. Efforts by the JDA to proceed with implementation of the Guidelines ran afoul of governors and mayors, who challenged the central government’s authority to compel them to allow U.S. forces to use civilian ports and airfields in time of crisis. While power is concentrated in Tokyo under Japan’s system of government, unlike the federal system of the United States or Germany, the blatant exercise of power by the central government polarizes the policy-making environment and violates Japanese norms. The left can organize protests, the media can attack the administration, and politicians can end up complaining to the bureaucrats for causing an uproar. Handling these central-local issues has further complicated the task of Alliance management, so that JDA officials devote even more of their energy to this already dominant pillar rather than strengthening Japan’s security relationships with its neighbors.

In the United States, traditional fears of multilateralism in Asia (owing partially to Soviet attempts to use multilateralism to undermine American relationships in the region) made Washington unnecessarily suspicious of Japanese enthusiasm.<sup>21</sup> American views have gradually changed as it was made clear that multilateral cooperation is not intended to in any way weaken the U.S.–Japan relationship, but the U.S. government remains jealous of potential alternatives to the current regional security structure that places the United States at the core. Although relations between the United States and Japan have been generally smoother and more positive in recent years than in the late 1980s and early 1990s, some in Washington remain dubious about Japan’s long term commitment to American leadership and American values. Where Washington is most enthusiastic about expanding the U.S.–Japan relationship toward a more multilateral structure is in regard to America’s other existing bilateral security relationships, particularly the U.S.–Republic of Korea (ROK) Alliance. Although the collective defense framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact eventually produced the cooperative structure of the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the NATO Partnership for Peace, building a U.S.-led collective defense structure in Asia hardly seems like the path to cooperation for Asian regional security. Overall, despite the steps forward that have been taken in the ARF and elsewhere, the idea that the Alliance and multilateralism are competitive approaches remains in both Tokyo and Washington.

The accidents of history also played a part in making the Alliance seem antagonistic to the region. The U.S.–Japan Joint Declaration on Security issued by President Clinton and Prime Minister Hashimoto was delayed from November 1995 until April 1996 in the aftermath of the horrible rape of an Okinawan girl by American troops. In the interval, Taiwan held its first democratic Presidential election, and China’s bellicose launching of missiles (intended to intimidate Taiwanese voters) brought two U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups to the region. The reaffirmation of the U.S.–Japan alliance and the agreement to revise the Guidelines became seen as a response to an emerging Chinese threat, although its aim had been to prepare for a contingency on the Korean Peninsula. China had been positive about the U.S.–Japan Alliance in the late Cold War and early post Cold War, but subsequently came to see it as a tool for a new containment strategy. Given that multilateral security cooperation depends primarily on accord among the major powers, Chinese and other suspicions of the Alliance interfere with Japan’s ability to pursue its three pillar strategy successfully.

This context of a tempestuous regional environment, lack of consensus within Japan, doubts in Washington, and the unforeseen collision of the Alliance revitalization with the Taiwan issue has made substantially more difficult the fundamental challenge of combining the

three approaches into a single strategy. As a result, Japan's defense bureaucrats have struggled to make progress in strengthening any one pillar of their security strategy, and when they do so it seems to make the structure as a whole less stable.

## **TOWARD A REMEDY**

As noted above, the national security strategy resting on three pillars is more than the product of some compromise among supporters of each approach. But it has failed to persuasively enlist those who would prefer to stick with one approach, so that some of those who back multilateralism do so to weaken the Alliance and self-defense efforts. The vision of a gradual transformation of the security relationships and architecture of the region has become blurred, so the individual steps taken in each area show no clear connection to each other or the final goal. There is now a need for policies that link the three pillars explicitly and achieve regional stability with an ever-increasing element of cooperation.

Greater transparency of military procurement and the development of Alliance plans for a contingency on the Korean Peninsula that engage China are needed. Among these possibilities, the expansion and improvement of confidence-building measures (CBMs) deserves immediate attention. The remainder of this essay will discuss the state of CBMs in the region, and how they might be better employed to remedy the current discord.

## **CBMs IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION**

Confidence-building measures are pragmatic steps toward ideal objectives.<sup>22</sup> They can be used by committed governments to help ease tensions and reduce the threat of conflict. They are not an end in themselves, nor can they succeed without political leadership. But, properly applied, they have succeeded in mitigating difficult security relationships and laid the groundwork for reconciliation. Particularly in the relationship between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, CBMs provided "credible evidence of the absence of feared threats." They became a key to peace by reducing the threat of surprise attack, allowing each side to recognize the other's essentially defensive orientation.

A great strength of CBMs is their flexibility and adaptability. First developed in Europe for a context of antagonistic blocs, CBMs have been applied in diverse circumstances from the Middle East to Latin America with success. Ranging from low-threshold measures such as exchange of defense White Papers to constraint measures that verge on arms control (such as limiting military deployments near border areas), CBMs can be tailored to the degree of trust already present and can be ratcheted up as relations improve.

In the Asia–Pacific region, CBMs have been slowly gaining acceptance since the early 1990s. Despite their record of success elsewhere, they were initially viewed in Asia as too “western” and were resisted.<sup>23</sup> Recently, however, the Asia–Pacific region has become home to the most dynamic CBM activity in the world.<sup>24</sup> The ARF process, with its Intersessional Support Group (ISG) on CBMs, is the foremost official forum for discussing and developing multilateral CBMs in the world. A Japanese initiative was behind the creation of the ARF in 1994, and Japan co-hosted the ISG on CBMs in its inaugural round in 1995–6, and again in the fifth (1999–2000) round. Furthermore, Japan participates in various Track Two multilateral CBM forums, including the Northeast Asia Cooperative Dialogue (NEACD), and the Council on Security Cooperation in the Asia–Pacific (CSCAP), and sponsors activities in Japan such as the Forum for Defense Authorities in the Asia–Pacific Region and the Asia–Pacific Security Seminar.

Despite this dynamism, however, there is growing frustration in Japan with the multilateral CBM process, in part because its requirement of consensus has prevented the development of any strong CBMs. The existing multilateral CBMs are broad but shallow. They have not progressed beyond “first-stage” transparency measures, such as exchange of defense policy statements, to notification measures or constraint measures. During the current ISG, the Japanese government has been focused on moving the agenda forward to cover preventive diplomacy (PD), in part to forestall the impending stagnation of CBMs in the ARF.

Japan’s bilateral military CBMs have also grown in recent years, but remain limited and highly volatile. Economic and cultural CBMs have long had an important place in Japan’s diplomatic toolbox, and were a core element of Yoshida’s strategy for relations with Asia, even if he never used the term. But reluctance in both Japan and among its neighbors has delayed the development of military and security CBMs. While the Asian context in both cultural and geopolitical terms is quite different from Europe, and calls for a broad approach, avoiding military CBMs leaves doubts and suspicions intact.<sup>25</sup> Finally confronting the need to supplement the softer approach with direct security CBMs, Japan has taken the initiative to

expand its bilateral military-to-military relationships.

Defense ties with Russia improved dramatically following exchanges of top military and defense personnel, mutual port visits, and joint training for Search and Rescue operations, only to falter with the lack of progress on a peace treaty or a resolution to the territorial dispute. Chaos in Russia's political situation, including the war in Chechnya, have made Japan cautious about pursuing closer ties at present. Furthermore, Russia's ongoing sale of advanced military equipment to China causes some Japanese serious concerns.

Japan's security relationship with South Korea likewise advanced dramatically, developing from mutual disdain to cooperation following CBMs backed up by political leadership. This evidence of the potential of CBMs to improve security ties is somewhat diluted by the strategic context, however, since both Japan and the ROK are U.S. allies, and both face a clear threat from North Korea. That it has taken over three decades since the two normalized diplomatic relations in 1965 for them to overcome their suspicions testifies to the power of the legacy of Japan's colonization of Korea from 1910 to 1945.

Bitter memories also taint Japan's bilateral relationship with China, but here as well there has recently been some progress through CBMs. Unfortunately, political factors in each country and the festering problem of Taiwan render this a highly volatile relationship. Chinese President Jiang Zemin's visit to Japan in November 1998, the first ever by a Chinese head of state, brought into the open the ongoing feud between the two sides over how to understand the unfortunate history of Japan's war against China. This debate has plain implications for China's position on Japan as a regional security actor. Chinese have begun to explicitly link the tougher Japanese position on history to the expansion of Japan's security role under the 1997 Guidelines, calling attention to the "remilitarization" of Japan. By papering over the dispute the two managed to restore a semblance of harmony to their relationship after Prime Minister Obuchi's July 1999 visit to China, but the Chinese continue to be wary of Japan's cooperation in developing TMD.<sup>26</sup>

## **RENOVATING THE THREE PILLARED STRUCTURE**

Japan's current national security strategy combines elements of deterrence, preventive defense, and the development of security cooperation. The distant goal of a regional regime for

security cooperation demands all three pillars of self-defense, Alliance, and multilateralism. This essay does not seek to completely recast Japan's strategy, nor to jettison any of the elements in place now. But we must begin to find ways to manage the frictions inherent in that strategy. Spreading the weight across three pillars does make a great deal of sense, but if each pillar is raised or lowered independently of the others, or if one is made to bear too much weight, the entire structure could be jeopardized.

From the broadest perspective, the need is to pursue the current strategy with greater attention to harmony among its elements. Practical steps to do so will require the involvement and insights of relevant policy makers, perhaps drawing on experience and ideas from elsewhere. There is no other country with a security environment, history and domestic structure quite like that of Japan, but continuing to learn from other countries that have managed to assure their own security while contributing to a cooperative regional security order can certainly provide valuable lessons for Japan's security policy community. Furthermore, it is vital for Japan to continue cooperating with others as it gropes towards the right combination of answers for Asia.

Multilateralism offers the most promising long term avenue for creating a benign security environment, but this requires a transformation of the security environment from zero-sum to positive-sum. Given this transformation is Japan's strategic goal, it does not make sense to call for security trade-offs between the Alliance structure and multilateral cooperation.<sup>27</sup> Instead, we must maintain the Alliance while gradually shifting its primary function from deterrence to cooperation. A few suggestions for how to begin that process follow.

First, continue to strengthen the Alliance. Despite reasonable concerns that the Alliance is already too dominant in Japan's security policy making, diluting it will leave an important job half done. We should enhance U.S.–Japan strategic dialogue and the transparency of bilateral policy making. Doing so will demonstrate to the Japanese leadership that it has shared authority—and responsibility—for regional security, and cannot simply entrust such untidy matters to the United States. The importance of transparency must also be emphasized: the natural tendency of national security bureaucracies everywhere is to secrecy. Where this secrecy is needed to protect legitimate national security interests it does have a place, but when it becomes a habit, to ensure smooth decision-making and avoid the disruption of divergent views, it is anathema to democracy. Faced with the need to educate the Japanese public, especially, about the roles Japan must play for regional stability, it would be foolish to close the doors on bilateral security dialogue.

Better U.S.–Japanese communication on strategic issues, rather than laborious talks on the details of current Alliance problems related to bases or procurement, will generate stronger consensus and provide a sound foundation for carrying out difficult but necessary policies. Under the status quo, Japanese often follow along reluctantly, with the attitude of “there’s nothing to be done about it.” This breeds a sense of irresponsibility and resentment against American “bossiness.”

Cooperation on TMD is a case where the Japanese side is moving ahead without a clear sense of how doing so fits within Japan’s strategy. The rationale most commonly heard in Tokyo is to protect the Alliance, but management of technology issues has historically proven more of a challenge to than a benefit for the Alliance. In fact, the TMD matter has already proven divisive,<sup>28</sup> arguably because of a lack of strategic dialogue.

Arms control is another area where such dialogue is necessary. The divergence between American and Japanese preferences in the area of nuclear disarmament is well known, but the rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by the U.S. Senate has inflamed the situation. Japan had begun to gradually exert stronger pressure for progress on disarmament, as a prominent foreign policy initiative, so the collision was particularly jarring.

Dialogue will not resolve every conflict of interest between Japan and the United States, but it can help prevent gaps on problems like North Korea’s Taepo Dong missile launch, gaps which then undermine confidence in the relationship. If each side has a chance to present its views and defend them, even if they remain apart they will have some understanding of the other’s position. As for procurement, it should help remove suspicions in Washington that Japan is working to reduce its dependence on the United States if Tokyo can articulate clear, strategic reasons for its decisions.

A main purpose of this enhanced dialogue is to generate the confidence in the Alliance needed to reach out to the region in a cooperative way. The unfortunate truth of Japan’s bilateral CBMS in the region is that they exist in the shadow of the United States. Relations between Japan and China can never be independent of Sino-American relations, because of the U.S.–Japan Alliance, but Japan’s CBMS with China fail to connect the two. Instead, Japanese officials and leaders must spend meetings with Chinese counterparts explaining the Guidelines and justifying Japan’s cooperation with the United States. Scrambling to respond to American pressure for clearer commitments of support simply to preserve the status quo, Japanese then must hurry to assuage the Chinese so as not to damage that relationship. It is like the Red

Queen's chessboard from Alice in Wonderland, where one must run simply to stay in place.

By first building a firm basis of sound Alliance relations, then reaching out as a partnership to create cooperative security ties to China, Tokyo (and Washington) can move forward instead of running in place. One important point to note is that this can never be a strictly trilateral or triangular relationship. The Alliance is a bond that none of the three can ignore. From the Chinese perspective, official talks among the three always threaten to turn into a two-against-one scenario. By binding the United States and Japan more closely, we can instead create a one-plus-one (Alliance-plus-China) framework. Transparency CBMS between the two sides would be far more reassuring than those that exclude one party.

Those in Japan who tolerate the Alliance for now because it provides stability and predictability, but hope eventually to transcend it through multilateralism are mistaken—the U.S.–Japan relationship will be a core element not only of regional security but for global issues, and the Alliance provides both a manifestation of the commitment on each side and a mechanism for managing that bilateral relationship. For it to be subsumed into a broader regional structure, it must first be strengthened further. The analogy of Anglo–American relations might be helpful to see why this must be so. Although formally no more intimate than any other NATO allies, the United States and United Kingdom have enhanced regional and global security by maintaining extremely close ties on the military level. Relations between the United States and Japan must build toward that goal.

## **REGIONAL CBMS AND JAPAN'S SECURITY STRATEGY**

Moving forward with CBMS as much as possible lies at the heart of advancing multilateral security cooperation. As noted in Akiko Fukushima's essay in this volume, Japan has become a more active promoter of multilateral CBMS for the Asian region and the Northeast Asian sub-region. The process of building confidence is not quick, so Japan must continue to strengthen its efforts on both multilateral and bilateral levels.

On the matter of defense exchanges, the proliferation of meetings and reciprocal visits of defense officials between Japan and Russia, China, and South Korea is certainly a welcome development. In the cases of Russia and South Korea, defense contacts have progressed to mutual port visits and then to joint training for search and rescue operations. The Maritime SDF

conducted joint training for the first time with the Russian Navy in 1998, and with the ROK Navy in 1999. Naval exchanges with the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) have still not developed, however. The two sides agreed in principle to work toward port visits back in 1998, but there has been no agreement on scheduling these yet, due to sensitivities among the Chinese people about Japanese in military uniforms.

One possibility for progress is to move beyond the bilateral framework of port visits, to an annual quadrilateral naval summit among the United States, Japan, Russia, and China. Sites like Vladivostok, which has already hosted ships from all the countries, might inaugurate a rotating program, particularly if funding support could be found. If the United States offered to host the next round, Japan and China might fall into place as participants in an existing multilateral system. Cooperation among the four big navies might later be expanded to include Canada and the Koreas, for a North Pacific Naval Summit.

## **CONCLUSION**

CBMs have become an important tool for Japanese security, employed within the framework of a comprehensive security strategy. These tools have already helped Japan to ease tense relationships with Russia and South Korea, as well as to build stronger ties to nations in Southeast Asia. But CBMs have limits, and need sustained political commitment to make a difference. If relations between the United States and China degenerate, there is little likelihood that Japan's own CBMs can be effective.

By rethinking CBMs in the context of Japanese national security strategy as a whole, and not as an afterthought to building the SDF and sustaining the U.S.–Japan Alliance, Japan can make its three pillared strategy work toward the stable, cooperative regional order that is its goal.

## Endnotes

1. The author would like to thank Michael Krepon for his invaluable comments and editorial advice, and Yuki Tatsumi for research support.
2. The Soviet Union was a convenient threat because Japan's location meant that by defending itself, it provided a "picket fence" against the Soviet Pacific Fleet. On the importance of norms in constraining Japan's policies, see Peter Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).
3. *1996 Diplomatic Bluebook: Working toward the Creation of a New International Order: Building a Multi-tiered Architecture* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, Japan), 48. The overall framework of national security is provided by the Constitution, the Basic Policy for National Defense of 1957, the 3 non-nuclear principles and the ban on arms exports, and by the fundamental stance of not becoming a military power. Japan has also upheld its "exclusively defensive defense" (*senshu bouei*) policy. The *Defense of Japan 1998 White Paper* adds "establishing foundations for security through domestic political stability" (p. 66) as a fourth element of an appropriate national security posture, but emphasizes the other three.
4. The 1976 National Defense Program Outline emphasized the SDF's function of repelling a limited invasion. See *Defense of Japan 1979*, Appendix 10.
5. *Defense of Japan 1991*, 56. The 1957 Basic policy also mentions domestic policy bases of security.
6. See Funabashi Yoichi, *Alliance Adrift*, for the details.
7. 1995 NDPO. See *Defense of Japan 1998*.
8. See Robert M. Orr, *The Emergence of Japan's Foreign Aid Power*, 1992; Susan Pharr, "Japanese Aid in the New World Order," in Garby and Bullock, eds., *Japan: A New Kind of Superpower?* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1994.)
9. See Michael Green and Benjamin Self, "Japan's Changing China Policy: From Commercial Liberalism to Reluctant Realism," in *Survival*, Summer 1996.
10. See Heinrich, Shibata, and Soeya, *United Nations Peace-keeping Operations: A Guide to Japanese Policies*, (UN University Press, Tokyo, 1999.)
11. In fact disaster relief has been the most compelling justification for the SDF vis-à-vis the Japanese public. Volcanic eruptions, typhoons, and earthquakes are foes Japan's military can fight heroically, and this role has been extended to the international arena. Despite the argument that international humanitarian missions can contribute to the creation of a more stable security environment, this paper will focus on military roles related to threats from other state actors.
12. See Akiko Fukushima, "Multilateral Confidence-Building Measures in Northeast Asia: Receding or Emerging," in this volume, and Benjamin Self, "Confidence-Building Measures and Japanese Security Policy," in Singh, ed., *Investigating Confidence-Building Measures in the Asia-Pacific Region*, Henry L. Stimson Center Report No. 28 (May 1999).
13. This vision draws on various strands of liberal international relations theory, such as institutional liberalism, economic interdependence, and economic development leading to democratization and democratic peace. The creation of a functioning international society, as opposed to anarchy and security competition, is the dream behind the third pillar of Japan's strategy.
14. See Aaron Friedman, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security* 18, No. 3, (Winter 1993/4); and "Europe's Past, Asia's Future?," in *SAIS Policy Forum Series Report* No. 3 (October 1998.)
15. The concept of a militarily powerful Japan neither allied with the United States nor embedded in a regional multilateral cooperative security structure was absolutely not part of the thinking behind the current national security strategy. Advocates of such an option do exist in Japan, but the vast majority of Japanese strenuously reject the idea as dangerous.

16. See Michael Green, *Arming Japan*, Columbia University Press (New York), 1995, and Richard Samuels, *Rich Nation, Strong Army* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1996), for two interpretations of Japan's "techno-nationalism."
17. Chinese have been advocating a multipolar regional order with the United States withdrawing and Japan continuing its military-averse posture, thus maximizing China's power position, but this appeals only to a tiny minority of Japanese and similarly few Americans. See Yu Bin, "Containment by Stealth: Chinese Views of and Policies toward America's Alliances with Japan and Korea after the Cold War," in *Stanford University A/PARC Paper*, September 1999.
18. See Marie-France Desjardin, "Rethinking Confidence-Building Measures: Obstacles to agreement and the risks of overselling the process," *Adelphi Paper* 307, 1996.
19. "*Bouei wa hyoden ni tsunagaranai*" was an aphorism of Japanese politics.
20. See Self, op. cit.
21. Informal discussion in Washington of an early drafts of the Higuchi Report, the document that became the basis for the 1995 NDPO, focused on advocacy of multilateralism. One American reader said he was startled by the extremely multilateral orientation and voiced discomfort, while according to one member of the Higuchi Commission, the reaction from the U.S. side was surprisingly harsh, and led him to tone down the final version.
22. Michael Krepon, "Conflict-Avoidance, Confidence-Building, and Peacemaking," in *Global Confidence Building: New Tools for Troubled Regions*, Krepon, et. al., eds. (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1999.)
23. See Fukushima in this volume. Also, interview by the author with Satoh Yukio, 15 September 1999.
24. See Benjamin Self, "CBMs and Their Implementation," unpublished paper presented at *the Fourth United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues in Kyoto: Security Concerns and Disarmament Strategy for the Next Decade*, 27 July 1999.
25. See Self, "Confidence-Building Measures and Japanese Security Policy."
26. See Jianwei Wang, "CBMs and China-Japan Relations," in this volume.
27. The model of trade relationships, which are recognized as positive-sum, might apply. The benefits of free trade areas such as NAFTA and the global regime of the World Trade Organization are seen as overlapping, rather than competitive. If all members of a security regime are better off by membership, it should not detract from their security that some members have even closer security ties—that is zero-sum thinking. Given that each type of arrangement brings different benefits, they should coexist.
28. See Cronin, Giarra and Green, "The Alliance Implications of Theater Missile Defense," in Green and Cronin, eds., *The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Past, Present, and Future*, (Council on Foreign Relations Press, New York, 1999.)